

Message Text

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44

ACTION ARA-10

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R 191835Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1224

INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY GABORNE

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

UNCLAS GEORGETOWN 736

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SUBJ: BANDARANAIKE, GOWON, AND KHAMA VISIT GUYANA

REF: GEORGETOWN 0613 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: FROM MAY 8 TO MAY 16, FOLLOWING COMMONWEALTH MEETING IN JAMAICA, GUYANA HOSTED VISITS BY HEADS OF GOVT FROM SRI LANKA, NIGERIA, AND BOTSWANA. THESE VISITS AND THOSE THAT PRECEDED JAMAICA MEETING FOLLOWED SIMILAR PATTERN. VISITING LEADERS TOURED CRIIOUS REGIONS OF GUYANA AND EMPHASIS WAS ON CEREMONY RATHER THAN SUBSTANCE. END SUMMARY.

2. FOLLOWING COMMONWEALTH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT MEETING IN JAMAICA, GUYANA HOSTED VISITS BY SRI LANKA PRIME MINISTER MRS. SIRIMAVO BANDARANAIKE, HEAD OF NIGERIAN FEDERAL MILITARY GOVT GENERAL YAKUBU GOWON, AND BOTSWANA PRIME MINISTER SIR SERESTSE KHAMA. EMPHASIZING PRIMARILY CEREMONIAL RATHER THAN SUBSTANTIVE ASPECTS, THESE VISITS GENERALLY FOLLOWED PATTERN ESTABLISHED BY PRE-COMMONWEALTH MEETING VISITS OF ZAMBIAN PRESIDENT KAUNDA AND CANADIAN PRIME MINISTER TRUDEAU (REFTEL). EACH HEAD OF GOVT WAS MET AT

AIRPORT BY PRIME MINISTER BURNHAM, MEMBERS OF CABINET, RULING

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PEOPLE'S NATIONAL CONGRESS PARTY SECRETARIAT, AND DIPLOMATIC

CORPS (IN THAT PROTOCOL ORDER). THEY THEN PROCEEDED TO GEORGETOWN IN FLEET OF CADILLACS AND OTHER RECENTLY PURCHASED AMERICAN CARS FOR WELCOMING CEREMONY IN BOTANIC GARDENS. DURING VISITS, EACH LEADER TOURED DIFFERENT REGION OF GUYANA.

3. MRS. BANDARANAIKE

WHO ARRIVED ON MAY 8, VISITED RICE GROWING AREAS IN ESSEQUIBO REGION AND SUGAR ESTATE ON WEST COAST DEMERARA. SHE ALSO HELD TALKS WITH PM BURNHAM REPORTEDLY ON POSSIBILITY OF ECONOMIC COOPERATION BETWEEN SRI LANKA AND GUYANA AND ON NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO NON-ALIGNED SUMMIT SCHEDULED FOR SRI LANKA IN 1976. IN HER PUBLIC COMMENTS, MRS. BANDARANAIKE EMPHASIZED SIMILARITY OF DEVELOPMENTAL PROBLEMS FACING SRI LANKA AND GUYANA AND MUTUAL COMMITMENT OF BOTH NATIONS TO NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT. SRI LANKA PM DEPARTED GUYANA ON MAY 10.

4. ARRIVING

ON MAY 11, GENERAL GOWON TOURED MINING TOWN OF LINDEN AND KAIETEUR FALLS DURING HIS THREE DAY VISIT TO GUYANA. THROUGHOUT HIS STAY, GOWON RECEIVED WHAT APPEARED TO BE MOST ENTHUSIASTIC RECEPTION GIVEN ANY OF RECENT VISITING HEADS OF GOVT. GOWON'S INFORMALITY AND SENSE OF HUMOR GENERATED WARM CROWD RESPONSE. AT PRESS CONFERENCE AT CONCLUSION OF HIS VISIT, GOWON SAID THAT IN FUTURE GUYANA WOULD PROBABLY SELL SUGAR TO NIGERIA, AND AT LATER DATE, BAUXITE, WHILE NIGERIA WOULD SELL EDIBLE OIL TO GUYANA. GOWON ALSO DISCUSSED PLANS TO AID GUYANA IN PALM OIL PRODUCTION, OFFERED TO ASSIST TRAINING OF GUYANA DEFENCE FORCE, AND TOUCHED ON PLANS TO ESTABLISH AIR LINK BETWEEN GUYANA AND WEST AFRICA. IN REPLY TO QUESTIONS ABOUT NIGERIAN DOMESTIC AFFAIRS, GOWON REFUSED TO BE PINNED DOWN ON TIMETABLE FOR RETURN TO CIVILIAN RULE. GENERAL GOWON LEFT GUYANA ON MAY 13.

5. THIRTY MINUTES AFTER DEPARTURE OF GOWON, BOTSWANA PRIME MINISTER KHAMA ARRIVED. KHAMA ARRIVED ON BARCLAYS BANK PLANE, SPECIALLY CHARTERED BY GOG, AHEAD OF REST OF DELEGATION IN ORDER TO PERMIT GUYANESE WELCOMING PARTY TO REMAIN AT AIRPORT AFTER GOWON SEND OFF. COMING AFTER GOWON, BOTSWANA PM HAD TIGHT ACT TO FOLLOW. IN DESCRIBING

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AIRPORT WELCOME, ONE HARD PRESSED RADIO COMMENTATOR REMARKS THAT SIR SERETSE APPEARED TO BE A MODEST MAN, AND, IN KEEPING WITH THIS, CROWD WAS GIVING HIM MODEST WELCOME. DURING HIS VISIT, BOTSWANA PM TOURED NEW AMSTERDAM, NEARBY BAUXITE PROCESSING FACILITIES AT EVERTON, NATIONAL SERVICE CAMP AT KIMBIA, AND KAIETEUR FALLS. IN HIS PUBLIC COMMENTS, KHAMA THANKED GUYANA FOR ITS SUPPORT FOR AFRICAN LIBERATION MOVEMENTS, PRASID GOG DEVELOPMENT PLAN, AND SAID GUYANA COULD BE MODEL

FOR AFRICA. PM KHAMA LEFT GUYANA ON MAY 16.

6. COMMENT: VISITS OF BANDARANAIKE, GOWON, AND KHAMA, LIKE THOSE OF TRUDEAU AND KAUNDA, RPDCEDED NO CONCRETE RESULTS, BUT SEEMED AIMED PRIMARILY AT ENCOURAGING GUYANESE TO HAVE MORE PRIDE IN THEMSELVES AND AT BOOSTING INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL STANDING OF PM BURNHAM.
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